**Amendment to the Specification**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 18, with the amended paragraph below.

This wide array of communication options can cause inconvenience and difficulty for users in some cases. For example, it may be difficult to determine the best communications application to use for initiating communications with a particular person. This may occur when the availability of that person using various communications applications is not known. "Availability" as used herein may refer to the availability of a person (e.g., is the person logged onto his computer), the availability of equipment (such as a web camera), and/or the availability of needed software. In other words, availability may encompass ~~whatever~~ numerous circumstances that might limit the ability to contact a person by a particular communications technique. Furthermore, the identifier of the person within a desired communications application, commonly called a "user id", may not be known by the person wishing to initiate communication. Before a communication session can be initiated, therefore, a "pre-conversation" by telephone or some other method may be needed in order to ascertain availability and/or obtain the person's identifier. Such additional conversations can greatly increase the time and effort expended in carrying out computer-based communication, particularly when more than two people are involved in the communication.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 22, line 9, with the amended paragraph below.

A flow diagram of an exemplary embodiment of a method for configuring computer-based communications is shown in Fig. 8. The procedure of Fig. 8 may be performed by a CAT program such as local CAT program 22 in Figs. 1 and 2, typically upon startup of the computer or startup of the CAT program. In the embodiment of Fig. 8, the communications application programs associated with the computer are checked for CAT compatibility (box 100). Ways in which the application programs could be checked for CAT compatibility include looking for certain files associated with CAT-enablement of the application, or sending an appropriate query to the application program, if it is running. If a checked program is not CAT-enabled, a CAT program may still be able to launch the application. If the user agrees to provide the appropriate identifier and password ("yes" branch of decision box 103), this information may be obtained through the same procedure used for CAT-enabled programs, beginning with box 104.[[,]] If the application is CAT-enabled and the user identifier for the application is not stored ("no" branch of decision box 104), the user is prompted for the identifier and the identifier is stored (box 106).

In the case of a CAT-enabled application, this situation could arise during initial set up of the CAT program. Once the identifier is stored, if the corresponding password is not stored ("no" branch of decision box 108), the user is asked whether password storage is desired. If the user wishes to store a password ("yes" branch of decision box 110), the password is received from the user and stored (box 112).

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 22, line 29, with the amended paragraph below.

It is noted that embodiments of the methods described herein may provide user control over security at many levels. In addition to allowing a user to choose whether to allow password storage, the method could in some embodiments allow the user to choose whether to allow identifier storage. In a further embodiment, the user could have a choice as to whether storage of an identifier and/or password is to be maintained only for the current session, or if the information may be retained after the session ends, for use in future sessions. Even if passwords are stored, they are preferably retained on the local computer, and not sent to a server computer or other participant's computer. Depending on the particular security concerns of the user, storage of passwords and/or identifiers even on the local computer may be refused. Because any identifiers or passwords not stored will need to be provided by the user at the time an application is launched, there is a tradeoff between security and convenience. Allowing user choice with respect to the storage of identifiers and passwords for each separate application program may give the flexibility needed for a user to come up with the appropriate balance of security and convenience for a given situation.

Please delete the title appearing with the Abstract on page 35, lines 1-2.

~~SELECTION AND INTERCONNECTION OF COMPUTER-BASED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES~~